

# healthy communities

FALLON COMMUNITY HEALTH PLAN'S QUARTERLY HEALTH GUIDE



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# kid stuff



## keep your kids safe and healthy

No matter what the season, you can follow a few basic “rules” to help your children grow up well and happy. They don’t require money—just your time and attention.

**1. Prevent violence by setting good examples.** Avoid hitting, slapping or spanking. Set limits for your children by letting them know what’s expected—and when they meet your expectations. Celebrate their successes with them.

**2. Make sure immunizations are current.** Review your children’s immunization records with your pediatrician and make sure they are up to date.

**3. Provide your children with a tobacco-free environment.** Second-hand tobacco smoke increases ear infections, chest infections and even Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

**4. Read to your children every day.** Start by the age of 6 months. Reading to children shows them the importance of communication and motivates them to become readers. It also provides a context to discuss issues and learn what is on their minds.

**5. Practice “safety on wheels.”** Make sure everyone in the car is buckled up for every ride, with children in the back seat in age-appropriate car seats. All bikers, skaters and skateboarders should wear helmets and other appropriate sports gear.

**6. Do a “childproofing” survey of your home.** With a child’s-eye view, go from room to room, removing all the



“booby traps” that await the curious preschooler. Think of poisons, small objects, sharp edges, knives and firearms, and places to fall.

**7. Monitor your children’s media.** It’s important to know what your children see and hear on television, in movies and in music. It’s wise to be cautious, too, about what personal information your children are viewing and sharing through computers and cell phones.

**8. Help your teenager understand** the difference between the misleading messages in advertising and the truth about the dangers of using alcohol and tobacco products.

**9. Pay attention to nutrition.** Nutrition makes a big difference in how kids grow, develop and learn. Provide foods from several food groups at each meal. Emphasize foods that are less processed, such as whole grain breads and cereals, and fresh fruits and vegetables.

**10. Make your children feel loved and important.** Kids develop a sense of self-worth early in life. Listen to what your children have to say. Assure them that they are loved and safe. Celebrate their

individuality and tell them what makes them special.

—Based on recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics. ■

## ensure your kids’ future bone health

The preteen and teenage years are a pivotal time for children to establish healthy bones and teeth, according to the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons.

“Bones help us to stand up straight, to run, to jump and to play,” says Lori Karol, pediatric orthopedic surgeon and spokesperson for the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons. “Between the ages of 10 and 18, you make the bone that must last your lifetime.”

Research shows that by the time a child’s growth spurts end around age 17, he or she will have established 90% of adult bone mass, making it critical that children take in enough calcium during these formative years.

The AAOS offers the following advice:

- Serve children low-fat or fat-free milk rather than soda or fruit juices—at least three cups per day.
- Encourage kids to eat naturally calcium-rich foods.
- Lactose-intolerant children, or kids who don’t eat dairy products, can get calcium by eating calcium-enriched foods like tofu, cereals, breads, and some juices.

To learn more about calcium and its role in bone health, visit [www.aaos.org](http://www.aaos.org) or [www.orthoinfo.org](http://www.orthoinfo.org).

—Courtesy of ARA Content. ■

## being part of the solution

It's a challenging time for our pocketbooks. The costs of gas, food and housing have skyrocketed. We're looking for ways to take charge and manage our budgets, from vacationing in our backyards to shopping at discount warehouses and cutting out entertainment extras. For many, it may be a difficult balance of "want" and "need."



We're facing a similar situation in health care. It's no secret that medical costs have spiraled out of control. Annual out-of-pocket spending per person on health care in Massachusetts is nearly \$10,000 today—one of the highest rates in the country. Reining in these costs will be key to the long-term success of the health care reform movement in Massachusetts.

While these issues may seem beyond our control, there are steps each of us can take to be part of the solution. First, we can take greater control of our own health in basic ways—eating a balanced diet, incorporating exercise into our daily lives, quitting smoking if we do, getting recommended health screenings and not ignoring health issues when they arise.

We also can pay more attention to the real cost of health care services we receive—and weigh our decisions appropriately. For example, if you had to pay the total cost of a prescription antacid medication at \$200/month or buy an equally effective over-the-counter version for \$20/month, which would you choose? Or, would you demand an MRI before following your doctor's recommended treatment if you paid the \$900 on average that this test costs?

These are tough, but important, questions. As health care evolves and costs increase, we must become more involved in managing our health care and our health spending. By being savvy consumers, in the same way we might approach other areas of our lives, we can make a difference that will have a cumulative impact on health care costs—and ensure that our dollars are used where they're most needed.

Sincerely,

Eric H. Schultz  
President and CEO  
Fallon Community Health Plan

Fallon Community Health Plan's quarterly health guide for members is produced by the health plan's Communications Department. The content of this magazine has been reviewed by our physicians and administrators. This publication does not advance any particular medical treatment, nor does it endorse the management of medical problems without the advice and care of health care professionals. We are not responsible for the content of Web sites referenced in this publication. Please note that some of the articles included in this magazine may describe services and/or procedures that are not covered benefits. Also, benefits described may vary by employer and plan.

For clarification of your covered benefits, please contact Fallon Community Health Plan's Customer Service Department at 1-800-868-5200 (TDD/TTY: 1-877-608-7677), or [contactcustomerservice@fchp.org](mailto:contactcustomerservice@fchp.org).

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*Most people take their lungs for granted. And why not? We breathe in and out about 20,000 times each day without having to think about it. Our bodies take care of this automatic process so well that we can't even stop ourselves from breathing if we try.*

*However, if we develop illnesses such as a bad cold, bronchitis or asthma, we can become very aware of our breathing and how uneasy it's become. We want relief—often in the form of a “magic pill” of our choosing. The trick is, however, that prescription medications may be right or wrong for you, depending on your condition and the drug's intended use. The rule of thumb for doctors is to prescribe “the right drug, for the right patient, taken in the right way.”*

*How can you properly use medications to breathe easier?*

### **the right medicine at the right time**

Teenager Moriah Johnson is one of the 6.5 million children in this country under the age of 18 who have asthma. Having developed symptoms by 18 months old, Moriah “doesn't know anything else,” explains her mom, Renée Johnson.

Over the years, Moriah has tried to minimize the various allergies, colds and even acid reflux that are triggers to her asthma flare-ups. Still, she's had her share of trips to the emergency room when the asthma got out of her control.

Asthma interferes with normal breathing by narrowing the lung's airways, causing wheezing, shortness of breath, coughing and chest tightness.

“Throughout 2007, and even earlier, it didn't seem that Moriah's asthma was as much under control as it had been,” says Renée. “Moriah didn't seem to feel safe staying overnight with family or friends. I was looking for answers last October—and



# breathe easy

then Maureen called out of the blue.”

Maureen Sorge, R.N., AE-C, the nurse care specialist who oversees the asthma care program at Fallon Community Health Plan, called the Johnson household when Moriah’s records showed she was using her “rescue” inhaler too often and might need additional help.

A well-accepted treatment guideline for asthma is the “rule of two”: If someone with persistent asthma takes a quick-relief inhaler more than *two times per week*, wakes up at night with asthma more than *two times per month*, or refills a quick-relief inhaler more than *two times per year*, their asthma is not under control.

Moriah exceeded the rule-of-two test on all counts. “I used my rescue inhaler up to twice a day,” she admits. “I stayed away from triggers as much as possible, but sometimes, like with colds, you just can’t avoid them. I did whatever activities I wanted, but I had scary episodes.”

Recently updated asthma guide-

lines\* emphasize that asthma can change over time. It’s important to regularly monitor a person’s level of asthma control so that treatment can be adjusted as needed.

“Maureen provided me with the push I needed to get the ball rolling for Moriah’s asthma, and gave me many useful tips during several follow-up conversations,” Renée admits. “At her suggestion, we visited Moriah’s primary care doctor and an allergist, and now we’re on the right track.”

In addition to an allergy medication, Moriah takes an inhaler that combines a time-released bronchodilator for more consistent relief with a corticosteroid to control the inflammation.

There’s strong evidence, according to the latest asthma guidelines, that inhaled corticosteroids are safe and effective, and they are still the best long-term control treatment for asthma patients of all ages.

Many parents have misgivings about giving their children a steroid. This has been a major stumbling block for controlling asthma in children. However,

corticosteroids are different from the anabolic steroids used by athletes. And when a corticosteroid is taken in a spray form, the risk of serious side effects is very little.

“I had to overcome my fear of steroids long ago when Moriah needed the medication as the only thing that would work to treat the severe eczema she had as a newborn,” Renée explains. “Steroids have their place and can alleviate suffering. It’s important to follow the doctor’s recommendations.

“The new control medication has made a huge difference,” Renée adds. “Moriah’s asthma is stabilized—and she’s much happier. And, I’m very relieved, too.”

“I definitely feel better,” Moriah agrees.

## the wrong medicine for the wrong reasons

When coughs, wheezes and sniffles drop by your house, everyone is

*continued*



miserable. Breathing for the afflicted can become a chore, and you want all the symptoms to go away fast. Being sick is too inconvenient! Your first thought may be to see the doctor for antibiotics.

Think again.

Antibiotics are good medicines to take against bacterial infections. However, antibiotics won't cure viruses, which are exactly what your child's cold and your acute bronchitis are. Taking antibiotics when you don't need them allows more strains of bacteria to become resistant to medicine. That means an antibiotic might not work when you really need it—a dangerous situation.

In most cases, any cold or acute bronchitis runs its course in a week or two. It often does take several weeks before the cough of acute bronchitis totally clears up. Talk to your doctor about treating the symptoms (cough, fever, aches), drink a lot of fluids and get plenty of rest.

If the cold or bronchitis symptoms last longer than two weeks or escalate (high fever, bad headache, persistent sore throat, labored breathing), see your doctor. There's a chance you could be developing pneumonia or a strep infection—both bacterial infections that do respond to antibiotics.

Someone who repeatedly gets bronchitis (an inflammation of the airways in the lungs) may actually have chronic bronchitis—a more serious illness. Most common in smokers, chronic bronchitis is caused by long-term inhalation of irritants (not a virus) and may last for months or years. It's considered a chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or COPD, and requires close medical management. In such cases, corticosteroids and antibiotics may be proper treatment options. Let your doctor be the judge.

### **making matters worse**

Smoking is unhealthy for everyone. But for people who have asthma, allergies, bronchitis, emphysema or other breathing issues, smoking makes their condition far worse. Smoking causes the

### **quitting smoking “changed my life”**

Here's what one successful “graduate” of FCHP's Quit to Win program recently wrote to Health Promotions Coordinator TJ Sweeney:

*Thanks for the great article you sent. It states what we ex-smokers have known for years—that quitting smoking is a difficult task to accomplish. The physical addiction by itself seems so overwhelmingly powerful. This addiction is made stronger when combined with all the other components of why we smoke(d) (e.g., emotional/mental/social). Together, all these forces create such a strong hold on people who smoke that quitting seems unachievable.*

*Thank goodness Fallon Community Health Plan founded their smoking cessation program. Otherwise, I may still be a smoker instead of a proud non-smoker who is in her third year (April 1, 2005) of being smoke-free!*

*It's wonderful to be an ex-smoker. Health-wise I feel great. I've since joined Weight Watchers® to lose my “quitting” weight gain and am proud to say I've achieved that goal. I've taken up yoga and am presently attempting Pilates. I've continued my love of hiking, and I've also learned how to kayak and snowshoe.*

*I love not smelling like cigarettes and not having to brave the elements outside to enjoy a butt break. I've also enjoyed spending the money I have saved! In addition to attending country music concerts, I even went on a seven-day Caribbean cruise. More importantly, I just like the idea of not being a slave to cigarettes!*

*I still attend my original group about once a month to show support for such a wonderful program that changed my life. Thank you. ■*

—Brenda A. White



airways to become swollen, narrow and filled with mucus—which is already the case for people who have trouble breathing. For them in particular, quitting smoking can make their condition more manageable and improve their overall quality of life.

Help is available through FCHP's Quit to Win program, which offers free stop-smoking sessions at several locations. We have one of the highest success rates in the country. Call 1-508-368-9540 or toll-free at 1-888-807-2908 (or e-mail tobacco.program@fchp.org) for more information about the program, which

includes nicotine replacement therapy. If group sessions are not convenient for you, phone counseling is available. ■

\* Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Asthma, by the National Asthma Education and Prevention Program, an expert panel coordinated by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute of the National Institutes of Health, issued August 2007. See guidelines at [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/asthma/index.htm](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/asthma/index.htm).

# fchp update



## fchp grants support physician-based programs

Fallon Community Health Plan presented its annual grants to support physician-directed programs that contribute to FCHP's mission of *making our communities healthy*.

FCHP awarded \$5,000 to Shape Your Future, a pediatric obesity program at **South Shore Medical Center** located in Norwell and Kingston, Mass. The program has included individual appointments with a pediatric nurse practitioner, a group orientation meeting and nutrition education classes, a supermarket tour and two exercise sessions each week. The FCHP funding will expand this program to an interactive Web site, where families can get information to make healthier meal planning choices, receive exercise advice and use community forums and tracking tools to help monitor and encourage progress.

FCHP awarded its second \$5,000 grant to **Pediatrics West in Westford, Mass.**, for its Smart Sex program. The funding will help Pediatrics West create age-appropriate material for its teenage patients. The Smart Sex program also will offer discussions on the topics of abstinence, delaying sexual activity, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and various birth control methods. ■



## charlton site meets growing need

Summit ElderCare®, sponsored by Fallon Community Health Plan, has expanded capacity to an additional location at its Charlton site at 88 Masonic Road on the Masonic Health Systems campus.

This step allows Summit ElderCare to conveniently serve a greater member of individuals in this area who want to continue living in their own home and community as an alternative to a nursing home placement.

Summit ElderCare's mission is to help adults 55 years and older who are nursing home eligible to remain living independently at home. We do this by offering a comprehensive package of insurance, medical and social services, including medically necessary prescription drug

coverage, geriatric case management and additional support services in the home.

The Charlton PACE Center was opened in 2006 on Overlook Masonic Health System campus. The expansion location opened this February. Both locations include outdoor patios with beautiful views of the 450-acre lawns, gardens and more. Participants enjoy hot meals each day at the Adult Day Health Center, stimulating activities and coordinated medical care from on-site medical providers.

Note: In some cases, there may be a monthly premium required based on your income or assets. All services must be provided by our authorized by the PACE Interdisciplinary Team (except emergency services). PACE participants may be held liable for costs for unauthorized or out of PACE program agreement services.

If you care for a frail elder or know someone who does, please call Summit ElderCare toll free at 1-800-698-7566 (TDD/TTY: 1-800-889-4106) or log on to [www.summiteldercare.org](http://www.summiteldercare.org). ■

H2219 SE 2008 32 r2 5/20/2008

## faulkner hospital, quincy medical center join fchp network

Fallon Community Health Plan has welcomed Faulkner Hospital and Quincy Medical Center into its provider network. Now, members with FCHP Select Care, FCHP Direct Care and Fallon Preferred Care can receive care at Faulkner Hospital, while members with FCHP Select Care and Fallon Preferred Care can receive care at Quincy Medical Center.

Faulkner Hospital is a 150-bed, non-profit community teaching hospital in Jamaica Plain that has a long history of meeting the health care needs of the residents of southwest Boston and

*continued*

## canal diggers race returns

Save the date—Sunday, September 14—to participate in Fallon Community Health Plan's second annual Canal Diggers 5 km Road Race and walk, and a one-mile fitness walk, in Worcester. Last year's inaugural race was a huge success, with more than 600 participants from across the Commonwealth. Plan to be a part of it this year—either running, walking or cheerleading. Later this summer, check out our Web site ([www.fchp.org](http://www.fchp.org)) for more information. ■

## fchp network *continued*

surrounding suburbs. It offers comprehensive medical, surgical and psychiatric care, plus complete emergency, ambulatory and diagnostic services.

Quincy Medical Center is a 234-bed, non-profit community teaching hospital with state-of-the-art medical technology, a highly skilled staff and a rich history of providing more than a century of public service to the City of Quincy and other South Shore communities. ■

## to our masshealth members

If you are in the WIC Nutrition Program and are also a Fallon Community Health Plan MassHealth member, you'll now receive your special/prescription formulas through your FCHP MassHealth insurance.

That's because the federal Medicaid (MassHealth) program now will pay for special/prescription formulas for women, infants or children who are in both the state and federal MassHealth programs.

Except for the first month, Massachusetts WIC will no longer

provide these formulas.

Beginning immediately, MassHealth-WIC participants who request special/prescription formulas will receive only one month of WIC checks for a prescribed special formula from the WIC Program.

Please be aware that you and eligible family members will continue to receive all other WIC services as usual.

To get your special/prescription formula from Fallon Community Health Plan, please contact your primary care doctor. If you need more help in getting the formula, please contact our Customer Service Department at 1-800-868-5200 (TDD/TTY: 1-877-608-7677), Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. ■

## hold on to your benefits booklet

As a member of Fallon Community Health Plan, you probably have tucked away a booklet from us, called *Evidence of Coverage*, which describes what benefits you have under your specific health insurance plan.

In the past, you regularly received from us updated versions of your *Evidence of Coverage*. We're changing this process to avoid the confusion and expense of multiple mailings. From now

## we can help with medicare and more

Do you have a parent whom you're helping to understand Medicare coverage or Fallon Senior Plan™ benefits? Perhaps you'll soon be eligible for Medicare yourself. Fallon Community Health Plan can help! Give us a call at 1-800-868-5200. Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. ■

on, you'll be mailed a new *Evidence of Coverage* only when there is a change in your coverage that will affect your financial responsibility. (This approach doesn't apply to our Fallon Senior Plan™ and MassHealth members, for which there are different regulatory requirements.)

As always, if you have a question about your benefits, we encourage you to call FCHP Customer Service at 1-800-868-5200 (TDD/TTY: 1-877-608-7677), Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. ■



## a caution about calls

We've all heard the cautions about not giving personal information over the phone.

At Fallon Community Health Plan, we want you to know that we do not call members to ask for confidential personal, medical or financial information. We also will fully identify ourselves to you when we do call, for any reason.

If you receive a call from someone claiming to represent FCHP who asks for medical information or your Social Security, credit card or bank account numbers, do not give out that information. Hang up and call FCHP at 1-800-868-5200 to report the incident. If you need to give FCHP bank account information for payments, then you may do so safely by calling us. ■

## affordable health insurance at fchp

Do you know someone in Massachusetts who is looking for health insurance for themselves or their family? Today, whether or not you spend money on health insurance is no longer an option—but how much you can save still is.

Spread the word about Fallon Community Health Plan. You get more of what you want with FCHP's wide selection of comprehensive, affordable health insurance plans for individuals and families in Massachusetts.

Our plans feature high-quality coverage:

- \$0 copayments for routine physicals and well-child visits
- Prescriptions at more than 1,000 retail pharmacies in Massachusetts
- Hospital care
- Office visits with your primary care physician or specialists
- Dental exams for the entire family
- Eye exams
- Tests and labs
- Emergency room services
- Chiropractic care
- Mental health and substance abuse counseling
- And more!

For more information, suggest a visit to our Web site at [www.fchp.org](http://www.fchp.org) or a call to us directly at 1-888-797-3247 (TDD/TTY: 1-877-608-7677). ■



## fchp pay it forward continues in 2008

Fallon Community Health Plan announced this winter that it would extend its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary Pay It Forward program for another year. Last year, 30 FCHP employees were randomly chosen to distribute a total of \$30,000 to their favorite charities. In February, another 30 employees were picked to donate money to a charitable organization of their choice.

"Pay It Forward made our anniversary special, and we were really only going to do it that one time," explains President and CEO Eric Schultz. "However, it was such a powerful experience, and we got such great feedback from so many different people, that we decided to do it again. I'm sure it'll have an equally strong impact on our employees and our communities." ■



*FCHP's Kathy Bien looks over her donation to the UMass Memorial Children's Medical Center with Director of the Child Life Program Rob Wing.*

## oh baby! program adds safety kits

If you're a parent with young children, their safety is a top priority—and it's one of ours, too! That's why we're introducing a Home Safety Kit to our popular Oh Baby! program for new and expectant parents.



Members enrolled in Oh Baby! already receive great benefits, such as a free convertible car seat, free prenatal vitamins and a book by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Now, you'll also receive this 46-piece kit that includes:

- Safety catches for cabinets
- Outlet plug covers
- Cabinet sliding locks
- Multi-purpose latches
- Doorknob covers

To learn more about the Oh Baby! program, visit [www.fchp.org](http://www.fchp.org) or call our Customer Service Department to enroll at 1-800-868-5200 (TDD/TTY: 1-877-608-7677), Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. ■

## breast reconstruction is available

Did you know that Fallon Community Health Plan provides benefits for mastectomy-related services? Under the Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act of 1998, we cover you for the following procedures: reconstruction of the breast affected by a mastectomy; surgery and reconstruction of the other breast with the goal of producing a symmetrical appearance; treatment of physical complications of all stages of mastectomy; and prosthesis. For more information, call FCHP Customer Service at 1-800-868-5200 (TDD/TTY: 1-877-608-7677), Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. ■

## a healthwise how-to

Have you checked out Healthwise® Knowledgebase, the comprehensive online health information resource available free to our members through [www.fchp.org](http://www.fchp.org)? With information and interactive features on diseases, conditions, medications and other health topics, Healthwise Knowledgebase helps you stay informed and in charge of your health.

To help you get started, we've created a helpful presentation that walks you through everything Healthwise Knowledgebase has to offer. It's easy! Once on our home page ([www.fchp.org](http://www.fchp.org)), just click on "Members," then look for the yellow box at right, labeled "Take control of your health with our tools!" There, under "Healthwise Knowledgebase," click "View a short tutorial."

Once you complete this Healthwise 101 review, we hope you'll use it often! ■

## link to information about your care

What should you do in an emergency? What are your rights and responsibilities as an FCHP member? How do you find an interpreter? For answers to these questions and additional information related to your care, please go to our Web site, [www.fchp.org/Members/HealthTools/ImportantInfo.htm](http://www.fchp.org/Members/HealthTools/ImportantInfo.htm).

You also can request this information by calling our Customer Service Department at 1-800-868-5200 (TDD/TTY: 1-877-608-7677), Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

## coordinating your care

At Fallon Community Health Plan, a team of health care professionals reviews member treatment histories to determine if the care given was medically necessary, efficient and clinically appropriate—and then looks for ways to improve all three areas in similar future cases. This process is called utilization review.

Our focus is on encouraging the best possible care. Therefore, FCHP does not offer any compensation or reward to its utilization review team or affiliated providers for denying or restricting appropriate care or services. Our decisions are based first and foremost on the benefits of receiving medically necessary care for prevention or treatment of illness. ■

# health, fitness and you!



## dining out is doable!

Whether you're watching your weight or your cholesterol, dining out doesn't have to be depressing or unhealthy. Next time you're out for dinner, keep in mind these tips from Weight Watchers®:

### 1. Not all salads are created equal.

Just because a meal contains lettuce doesn't always mean it's a healthy choice. All the extras, like croutons, cheese, nuts, eggs and meat, can double the fat and calories.

**2. Fried is a "fat alert."** Opt for foods that are baked, broiled, steamed or roasted. Crispy, crunchy or battered are code words for "fried."

**3. Keep it plain and simple.** Avoid sauces and dressings, which add calories and fat to your food. Look for lower-fat versions or use spices to add flavor without the calories.

**4. Fiber first, fat on the side.** Base your meal on a high-fiber food, such as a baked potato or salad. Toppings, such as sour cream and guacamole, are loaded with extra calories—so instead try yogurt, low-fat cottage cheese or salsa.

**5. Order a kid's meal.** This option is a perfect portion-controlled solution when you want all of the taste without all the calories.

*FCHP's It Fits! program reimburses many families up to \$300 each calendar year for membership in Weight Watchers®, fitness centers and a variety of fitness activities.*

Weight Watchers® is a registered trademark of Weight Watchers International, Inc. ■



## web site offers virtual connection during illness

Have you heard about CarePages—a free, easy-to-use Web site that helps family and friends communicate when a loved one is receiving medical care? CarePages helps families create a virtual meeting place on the Web, share news and photos as often as needed and receive emotional support during a time of need.

Nearly three million people have used CarePages ([www.carepages.com](http://www.carepages.com)) to create online support communities when a loved one or friend is hospitalized or recovering, when a baby is born or when an elderly relative is in long-term care. Patients or their caregivers can set up their individual CarePages in a few simple steps and communicate with family around the country and the world.

Plus, the locally-based Kenneth B. Schwartz Center has recently partnered with CarePages to launch Compassionate Connections in Healthcare, offering individuals and their families information, resources and the opportunity to tell their stories about compassionate caregiving.

Shortly before his death from lung cancer at age 40 in September 1995, Kenneth B. Schwartz wrote about his care experience and established an organization dedicated to strengthening the relationship between patients and caregivers. This initiative is another step toward fulfilling that mission. Learn more at [www.carepages.com/compassionateconnections](http://www.carepages.com/compassionateconnections). ■

## member tools for healthier living

FCHP offers its members Nurse Connect, free, around-the-clock access to registered nurses or other health care professionals by calling 1-800-609-6175. For additional resources, you can log in to Nurse Connect's Dialog Center<sup>SM</sup> through the "My FCHP" section of our Web site, [www.fchp.org](http://www.fchp.org).

New on the Dialog Center are five self-learning programs that provide health assessments and tailored plans for achieving goals. The five modules offered are: **weight management, nutrition improvement, stress management, smoking cessation** and **low-back pain**. The programs offer thoughtful guidance, motivational tips and the tools to make lasting health behavior changes. ■



## live long and prosper!

Many aspects of the aging process are determined by lifestyle factors. The way we choose to live our lives today affects our health tomorrow. Harvard researchers identified seven predictors of a long and happy life. The great news is that these predictors are not based on heredity. They're all within your personal control.

- **Get regular exercise throughout your life.** You probably know this, but do you do it?
- **Quit smoking.** Again, no surprise here!
- **Don't abuse alcohol.** A drink now and then doesn't seem to pose a problem.
- **A stable marriage helps—**especially after age 50. Maintaining good relationships with friends and family counts, too.
- **Maintain a healthy weight.** Trust us; this one is going to show up on any list we print!
- **Learn and use good coping skills.** Try to look for the silver lining. It's all about the power of positive thinking!
- **Education.** Be a lifelong learner. It's more important than money when it comes to living longer.

Strive to make these recommendations a part of your life now. They won't stop you from getting older, but they can extend your years of healthy life.



### learn more!

What types of screenings and preventive care should you get? What types of physical changes can you expect as you age? Go to the Healthwise® Knowledgebase Web site offered on the Fallon Community Health Plan home page, [www.fchp.org](http://www.fchp.org). Once in the Healthwise site, type "healthy aging" in the search tool. ■

## long-term medication precautions

Have you been taking a prescription medication for more than six months? If you are taking certain types of medications, it's important to have your blood tested at least once every year so your doctor can monitor any side effects. You want to be sure that you can continue taking the drug safely. These medicines include:

- diuretics (fluid pills)
- cholesterol-lowering medications
- anti-seizure medications
- blood pressure medications
- some heart medications

Please talk to your doctor about whether you need to be monitored for any long-term medication you are on. ■

## your prescription coverage explained

Starting in August, if you are enrolled in one of our plans with Medicare prescription drug coverage (Part D), your *Explanation of Benefits for Your Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage* (EOB) will have a new look with additional and more complete information.

The EOB is the statement you get each time you use your prescription drug coverage during a given month. The new EOB format will give you more of the information you need to manage your coverage. It will include more complete information about the prescription drug claims processed in previous months, a record of your total out-of-pocket costs and total drug payments transferred from your previous plan(s) (if applicable), a table that will show which coverage period you are currently in, and contact information if you have questions. We hope you find it more useful. ■

Fallon Community Health Plan and VNA Care Network & Hospice recently announced a joint venture to acquire Worcester-based Home Staff, a privately held, home supportive services agency that provides a variety of in-home services from four offices in Massachusetts.

"The health and wellness of the communities we serve is of vital importance to us, and our new partnership with VNA Care Network & Hospice gives us even more opportunities to provide critical services to residents in Massachusetts," said Eric H. Schultz, FCHP President and CEO. "Together, we have the ability to offer an innovative approach to long-term care."

"Our focus has always been to support those who are facing illness and injury while remaining at home," explained Karen H. Green, President and CEO, VNA Care Network & Hospice. "By working together with Fallon Community Health Plan, we'll be ensuring that patients and families have options for long-term care that are community based."

Home Staff, which was founded in 1977, has cultivated a reputation of delivering the highest-quality care to its clients. Their 370-plus employees currently provide nearly 400,000 hours of services annually.

With locations in Worcester, Centerville, Leominster and West Springfield, the Home Staff team provides support services that include personal care, cleaning, errands, escorts to medical appointments and respite/companionship.

The move represents a second addition to FCHP's business line as a provider of care. Unique among Massachusetts health plans in providing care as well as insurance coverage, FCHP also operates Summit ElderCare®, a Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly, which provides day-to-day clinical care to frail elders—giving them the ability to live independently within their own homes and communities. ■

"Our focus has always been to support those who are facing illness and injury while remaining at home,"

—Karen H. Green, President  
and CEO, VNA Care  
Network & Hospice

Teenager Moriah Johnson of Ipswich, Mass., has had asthma since she was a toddler. Growing up, she had her share of flare-ups triggered by colds or seasonal allergies, and even made a few emergency room visits. Regardless, the asthma didn't stop Moriah from excelling in her school work, playing the piano, or cooking and babysitting for her active younger sisters.

Through most of 2007, however, Moriah's asthma gradually got worse. Her mom, Renée, was worrying more about her daughter's health and self-confidence—and knew they needed a new plan of action. With perfect timing, Fallon Community Health Plan's asthma nurse care specialist called the Johnsons last October.

She discussed how Moriah's apparent overuse of a rescue inhaler was a sign that she needed a new treatment approach to her asthma. That conversation, and the several others that followed, gave Renée the guidance to pursue medical care that has made a huge difference in Moriah's health and outlook.

Read more about Moriah's story in this issue's feature article, "Breathe Easy."



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Si usted desea que se traduzca al español alguna información en esta publicación, favor de llamar a Departamento de Servicio al Cliente de FCHP al 1-800-868-5200 (si tiene problemas de audición llame al 1-877-608-7677) de lunes a viernes de 8 a.m. a 6 p.m.

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